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Corn Meal - Officially Declared in Surplus

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A radio interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. John Baker, Office of Information, broadcast Tuesday, June 13, 1939, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home program, by the National Broadcasting Company and a network of 104 associate radio stations.

JOHN BAKER:

Now to report briefly on another of the eight foods officially declared in surplus. Last week we spoke of dried prunes. Mrs. Carpenter of the Bureau of Home Economics gave highlights on the food values of prunes and offered some recipes. I hadn't realized before there were so many ways of serving prunes. And they all sounded like very good eating.

Now today Ruth Van Deman's here to tell the story for corn meal.

RUTH VAN DEMAN:

Not quite the whole story, John---all I have time for is a few chapter headings. It takes a Farmers' bulletin to tell all the ways of making corn meal good eating. Look at the pages and pages or recipes here.

BAKER:

I didn't realize there was a new bulletin on corn meal.

VAN DEMAN:

There isn't. I didn't mean to say this was new. It's one of the old reliables. We couldn't do business in the Bureau of Home Economics without "Corn and its Uses as Food."

BAKER:

Just like a package of corn meal on the pantry shelf--no well-regulated household should be without it.

VAN DEMAN:

Maybe not everybody would go quite that far.

BAKER:

Maybe not.--But as a native son of Indiana--who hoed the corn--that made the grain--that ground the meal--

VAN DEMAN:

--That baked the bread. Yes, as a son of the Middle Border have it your way.

And I grant you too that when I take over the housekeeping every summer at a certain cottage in the country, one of the first things on my grocery list is corn meal. When Sunday morning comes around, somebody's sure to call for spoon bread and bacon for breakfast. Or a cool evening for supper, they want fried corn meal mush with cheese - - -

BAKER:

Any calls for plain mush and milk?

VAN DEMAN:

Plenty of them. And I have one friend who comes for a mush-and-milk party. Her mother has the idea that corn meal is "heating" in summer.

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BAKER:

Not any more heating than any other kind of cereal, is it?

VAN DEMAN:

Not a bit. Practically all cereals run somewhere around 1600 calories to the pound. That's dry, of course. When they're mixed with water or made into bread the calories run much lower.

BAKER:

Any difference in the corn meal that has the germ in it? - - -

VAN DEMAN:

What some people call "waterground" or "old process"?

BAKER:

Yes, the old-fashioned kind ground out of the whole grain.

VAN DEMAN:

There's not enough difference to bother about on the caloric side. But on some of the other food values, yes. The germ carries most of the corn oil. And the vitamin A's chiefly in that oil. That's particularly important in yellow corn. It's much richer in vitamin A than white corn. In fact yellow corn's higher than white in several food values.

BAKER:

Too bad for the people who want their corn meal white.

VAN DEMAN:

Not if they eat lots of green and yellow vegetables--tomatoes--oranges--yellow peaches. They can easily make up the difference.

BAKER:

True. You've often told us that no one food needs to do the whole job.

VAN DEMAN:

Going back for a moment to the "whole ground" meal. It spoils more quickly --is more likely to get rancid in warm weather--than the meal with the germ taken out.

BAKER:

That's the basis of the modern milling methods, isn't it?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, so I understand. But whether they grind corn meal fine or coarse seems to be a matter of taste--how people like it in different parts of the country.

BAKER:

I like it so you can tell it's meal.

VAN DEMAN:

You probably lean to the coarse kind then. That takes up more liquid in cooking. And you have to cook it a little longer. Some recipes are built for the fine meal. Others for the coarser.

BAKER:

The recipes in your bulletin there--are they fixed that way?

VAN DEMAN:

As far as we could. It's hard to be absolutely definite--because what's fine corn meal to one person is fairly coarse to another. A person just has to learn by experience. If the corn pone's too dry one time, just use more liquid the next.

BAKER:

And always get the butter on it while it's hot.

VAN DEMAN:

And plenty of butter if you can. Corn bread can take lots of butter.

BAKER:

Butter's another of the foods officially declared in surplus.

Ruth, we appreciate your coming today with these facts and suggestions about cooking corn meal.

(Ad lib offer of bulletin - "Corn and It's Uses as Food")

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